



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## SAINT MARY OF MELÓN

---

S. MARIA DE MELÓN lies in the mountains above the Miño, in the diocese of Orense. Of its history, Sr. Lampérez says<sup>1</sup> he knows that the original Cistercian church still stands, on the credit of Sr. Villa-Amil, who has never seen it: Yepes (1609) wrote<sup>2</sup> that in 1142 two more houses were annexed to the Cistercian order, St. Mary of Melón, and St. Mary of Meira, and that not one paper of Melón has survived: the first abbot was called Gerard: from *España Sagrada*<sup>3</sup> little more may be learned; Alfonso VII, the Emperor,<sup>4</sup> endowed it, the place was called at first Barcena, and the phrasing of a privilege of 1155 suggests that a convent had already existed. The Licenciado Luis de Morales in a long topographical poem on Galicia,<sup>5</sup> preserves the legend of the original foundation: it seems that Felipe and Maria, the children of Sancho the Fat (*ob.* 956), had married, though they were brother and sister;



FIGURE 1.—MELÓN: THE ABBEY CHURCH.

<sup>1</sup> Vicente Lampérez y Romea, *Historia de la Arquitectura Cristiana Española en la Edad Media*, II, p. 477.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Antonio de Yepes, *Cronica General de la Orden de San Benito*, VII, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Florez, *España Sagrada*, XXIII, pp. 24 ff.

<sup>4</sup> His sister, Doña Sancha, was also in close relations with S. Bernard, who was, indeed, a cousin of their father, Count Raymond of Burgundy.

<sup>5</sup> Luis de Morales, *Descripción del Reyno de Galicia* (1675), p. 80.

when separated they founded in expiation the monasteries of Allariz, Osera, and Melón. Ambrosio de Morales<sup>1</sup> on his great journey in 1572, visited the monument and saw the original privilege, dated May 28, 1142, of Alfonso VII, others of Ferdinand II of Leon, his son, and of Alfonso VIII, but found only

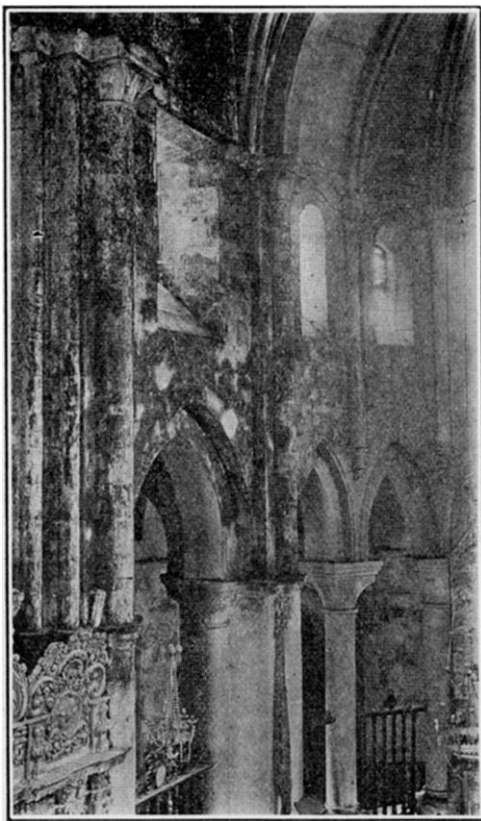


FIGURE 2.—MELÓN: APSE.

small relics, no books, and no royal burials. It had once a hospice.

An examination of the earlier volumes of Manrique yields a little more information. Melón seems to have been the seventh in the order of foundation of Spanish Cistercian abbeys, and the second in Galicia. Moreruela comes first, founded in 1119 and transferred to Cîteaux in 1131; then another site in the region of Zamora; third Osera, 1140; then three in the Castiles, and Melón, 1142. The original foundation was at a place called Barcena, where buildings were already in existence, as it would seem

from the phrasing in the earliest document extant, which says not *construendum*, but *constructum*. From the rich endowment signed in Palencia in 1155 by Alfonso the Emperor, I extract the principal part:<sup>2</sup>

“ . . . Quapropter ego Aldefonsus Dei gratia totius His-

<sup>1</sup> Ambrosio de Morales, *Viaje par Orden del Rey D. Felipe II*, etc., p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> P. Angel Manrique, *Annales Cistercenses*, I, p. 336.

paniae Imperator, una cum uxore mea Imperatrice Dona Rica, & cum filiis Sanctio & Ferdinando Regibus. Deo, & Ecclesiae sanctae Mariae de Barcena, & vobis Dómino Giraldo eiusdem Ecclesiae Abbati, & omnibus successoribus vestris, pro animabus parentum meorum, & peccatorum meorum remissione, facio charitam donationis, & textum firmitatis de illo monte, qui vocatur Veduego, & Vaisti, dono, & concedo vobis ipsum montem cum pratis, & pascuis, cum ingressibus, & egressibus suis, & cum omnibus suis terminis, directuris, & pertinentiis, & cum suis aquis. Quomodo dividitur de Corcores, & inde per Penedum, & per Taboazas: & inde quomodo dividitur de sancto Pelagio de Lodo. Et inde quomodo dividitur demontes per illam Forcam de Girazga, & inde per Viariz, & est in terra de sancto Ioanne de Pena cornera. Et hoc facio vobis, ut ab hac die habeatis, & possideatis, & omnes successores vestri, iure haereditario in perpetuum, & faciatis de illo, quidquid vestra fuerit voluntas. . . . ”

In 1156 the abbey was moved from Barcena to Melón, and the name was changed correspondingly. In 1160 Ferdinand of Leon and Galicia makes further gifts:<sup>1</sup>

“ . . . Eapropter ego Fernandus Dei gratia Rex Legionis, &

<sup>1</sup> Manrique, *op. cit.* I, p. 337.



FIGURE 3.—MELÓN: AMBULATORY.

*Gallesiae dominator, facio textum, & scriptum firmitudinis, in perpetuum valiturum de sancto Cypriano Montis Regij cum omnibus directuris suis, & terminis suis, quos habuit antiquitus, & sicut tenuit Martinus Gemendi de Barcena, de Canalibus, cum omnibus directuris suis, de sancta Eugenia Ripae maris, cum tanta largitate terrae, quantum unum iugum bovis laborare potuerit, tibi*

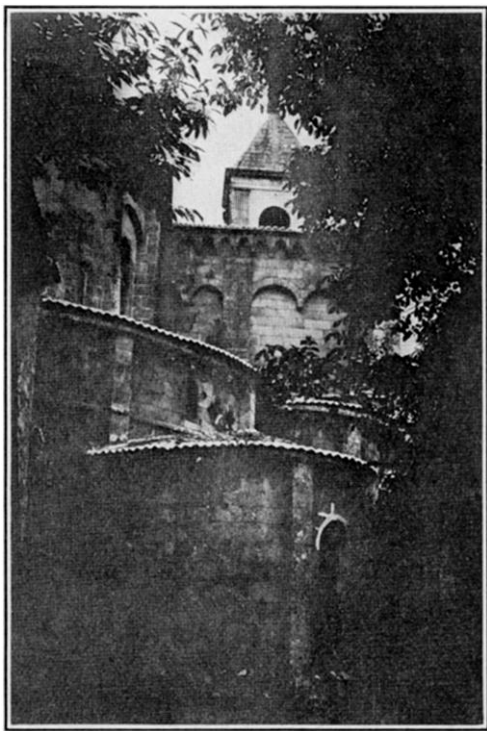


FIGURE 4.—MELON: THE EAST END.

*Giraldo Abbati de Melone, & omnibus successoribus tuis, canonice substituendis, ut loca ista praedicta habeas, possideas, vendas, & cambies, & de eis facias omne quod ad honorem & utilitatem tui spectat Monasterij. Nulli igitur hominum liceat, &c. Data charta sub aera MCXCVIII in Monasterio Cellae novae, quinto Kalendas Ianuarij, die sanctorum Innocentium, in discessu iunctae, quam praefatus Rex habuit cum Rege Portugalesi. . . . ”*

Gerard's successor was Martin, a holy man, who got many things from the King.

In 1205 a lawsuit was in progress between the convent and the old house of S. Michael called *de Canalibus* which it had absorbed. Later, it had some sort of power over “two colleges of the Seraphic Order in her own land”—i.e., a couple of Franciscan convents, one in Ribadavia. The point of all this is that the present building was not commenced in the first half of the twelfth century, as hitherto believed, but certainly after 1155, and probably after 1160,—well along toward the last quarter of the century.

In 1915 I had occasion to visit the place, driving up in about two hours from Ribadavia, an ancient city with three fine Romanesque parish churches and a beautiful palatine one of Galician Friars' Gothic. The convent of Melón has disappeared; the nave of the church fell early in the past century, and all but one bay and a sort of stump had to be taken down (Fig. 1). A modern inscription in the sanctuary says that the church was begun in 1147, but this beginning was hardly more than marking out a plan. The date of dedication is not known. Osera, founded in 1137, was not dedicated until 1239.

Except for the absence of aisles in the nave, the plan is Cistercian and was imported, as at Moreuela and Veruela in Castile, Fitero in Aragon, Poblet in Catalonia: it consists of a nave without aisles, transepts with small apses eastward, a great apse girdled by an ambulatory, and three radiating chapels. The transepts are rib-vaulted,—in one great bay, octopartite, on the north, and two bays, quadripartite, on the south,—and out of these open duly the apse and the ambulatory. From the north transept opens northward a vaulted chapel, square, with eastern apse, the latest bit of building that remains, but continuous in style with the rest.

The sanctuary consists of one bay, quadripartite, lifted high



FIGURE 5.—ORENSE: THE CATHEDRAL.

toward the clerestory wall, and a chevet of eight ribs, twisted a little to get them to one centre (Fig. 2). Correspondingly, the arcade below has a fine wide pointed arch, then a square pier with four engaged columns, and seven high pointed arches of two orders, carried on cylindrical columns. The vaulting shafts

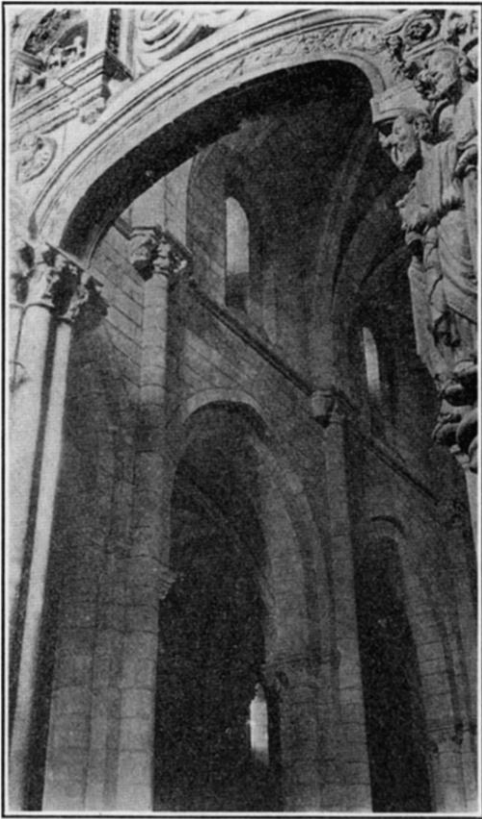


FIGURE 6.—ORENSE: INTERIOR OF CATHEDRAL.

do not descend to these, but stop on brackets set between the arches just below the point. It is likely that this indicates an intention, at the outset, to use barrel vaults and semi-domes, as at Notre Dame la Grande and Notre Dame du Port, even in a Cistercian church: that occurs at Moreruela and Poblet. The piers of the crossing, though more massive, are like that of the sanctuary. The abacus is large, square, and curiously moulded in three bands. The capitals, of a noble, late transitional form, with rather flat leaves laid against the bell, recall a like motive at Font-Froide and at

Veruela. A sort of string-course, continuing the abacus of the vaulting capitals, is turned up in a wide curve over each of the seven round-headed apse windows. There is another round-headed window, at the level of the clerestory, in the east face of each of the transepts, a third high in the south, and a fourth, now blocked, in the face of the north transept. The rest of the windows are spoiled, except those between the chapels of the ambulatory.

The ambulatory begins beyond one bay of quadripartite vaulting, the great shafts of which are engaged in the wall, and a heavy pointed arch, somewhat stilted, of an early form (Fig. 3). There is just such a one at Moreruela. The floor has been raised and now hides the bases of the columns at the openings of the chapels. The vault is a continuous barrel vault, turning to follow the curve, pierced with small windows. There is something very odd about this, but the ribs are original and moulded like those of the apse, also original the string-course below them, the capitals, and the shafts on which they rest. These last formerly were continued to the floor, but were cut off and consoles worked beneath in the seventeenth century, when the Lady-chapel was extended and the vault altered. The other two chapels of the ambulatory have pointed barrel vaults. The opening, of two square orders like the apse-arcade, rests on attached shafts, and the bases of the apse-columns are of the thirteenth century form, on high plinths that must once have been higher. This same rather awkward arrangement occurs I think in an aisle at Tuy, and in a good many English and Norman churches.

Twelfth century work has not this aspect. Consider in Irache the later part of the nave, or the early part of Veruela, conse-

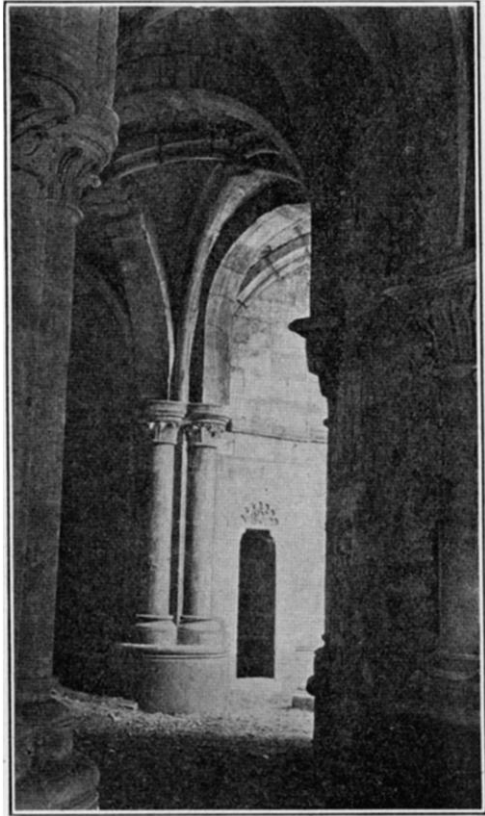


FIGURE 7.—S. LORENZO DE CARBOEIRO:  
AMBULATORY.

erated in 1211. The archaic elements are:—the plan like that of Doña Sancha's foundation at Moreruela,<sup>1</sup> the square-edged plain arches, the barrel-vaulted chapels. The moulded ribs, the carved corbels, and the form of capital and base are signs of a later time. Outside (Fig. 4), the eastern end shows that the



FIGURE 8.—S. MARIA DE CAMBRE:  
AMBULATORY.

windows in the ambulatory vaults are original. There are strong arches between the buttresses of apse, transept, and nave. This is the style of southwestern France, used in the cathedral of Santiago, and much more markedly in those of Tuy and Orense. Some things, however, in the height of the wall of the apse and the insistence on vertical lines in this eastern view, recall the Friars' churches of Galicia, like S. Francisco of Lugo. Probably from them also came the thought of only one nave. The use of corbels or brackets to sustain an arch is common in Spain,—for instance in the dormitory at Poblet. Except in

the ambulatory, these at Melón, in the apse and in the northern chapel, are carved in the same style as the capitals adjacent. The use of a sort of clerestory in the ambulatory and of a barrel vault at the entrance to the chapels repeats Moreruela. The

<sup>1</sup> For Moreruela, cf. Sr. M. Gomez Moreno, *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Excursiones*, XIV, 1906, pp. 97–105.

capitals and abacus of the apse, the capitals and string course in the ambulatory are provincial imitations of those in the nave of Orense—also the arches on the outer walls of the transept, and the curious lifting of the stonework around the clerestory windows, have their prototype there (Fig. 5). To date this work, which has a tang of the soil in its cool fairness, we must fix the dates at Orense.

Bishop Diego III of Orense (1100–1132) was a canon of Santiago; he may have dreamed of rebuilding his cathedral but he did not copy Compostela. That has an ambulatory and seven chapels. This had until the sixteenth century three parallel apses, according to all authorities. Bishop Pedro Servino, or Seguíno (1157–1169), came from Poitiers;—"in the first year of his rule he was already increasing the fabric of the new church," says Gil Gonzalez Dávila,<sup>1</sup> which can only mean that he enlarged the plans. "His work was confirmed by Alfonso the Emperor, and he died a saint." He brought the Poitevin wall-structure and established it for the cathedral, which was consecrated in 1194. Bishop Lorenzo (1218–1248), much beloved, called *Regla de Derecho*, "built the church (Fig. 6) and the abbot's palace of ashlar that the work might be permanent." Dávila says he built the church: Sr. Lampérez<sup>2</sup> says that in those years the nave was completed and the vaults closed. Between him and the Poitevin came Bishop Alfonso (1174–1213), who was strong and rich and probably built along steadily: the consecration took place in his time; but Bishop Lorenzo coming last gets all the credit.

If these dates are accepted, then the church of Melón, copying that of Orense, was only up to the arches by the middle of the thirteenth century, and lagging on, keeping to its own style on its lonely height, still carved the forms that we call "transitional," both leaf and flower, in the end, presumably of the fourteenth century. Lugo has Romanesque of the fifteenth century to show. By the time the carvings of the north chapel at Melón were finished, theirs, though lovely, is yet a starveling art. S. Lorenzo of Carboeiro, built 1171–1192, shows Benedictine building contemporary with the beginnings of this, but lustier, from a sturdier stock (Fig. 7). S. Maria de Cambre (Fig. 8),

<sup>1</sup> Gil Gonzalez Dávila, *Teatro Ecclesiastico de las Iglesias de España*, III.

<sup>2</sup> Sr. Lampérez suffers under some confusion of names and dates; I have kept his dates, letting his names go. See Lampérez, *op. cit.* I, p. 567.

near Corunna, which Sr. Lampérez<sup>1</sup> feels was rebuilt in the thirteenth century, may serve to illustrate the treatment of an ambulatory and its rib-vaulted chapels, by an architect who, though he clung to certain Romanesque motives, had a vigorous, inventive, and growing science. At Melón the Cistercian ideal, imported but quite comprehended, and maintained even in the frail leaf capitals so unlike the sappy tendrils at Cambre, was modified by local conditions, by the Friars' Gothic, the cathedral style, and the isolation of the *Chantier*.

GEORGIANA GODDARD KING.

BRYN MAWR, PENNSYLVANIA,  
December, 1916.

<sup>1</sup> Lampérez, *op. cit.* I, p. 573.